



CONCERNING

THAT

COVER....

Dear Jack;

Here's the cover, as promised. Hope it appeals to your sense of the weird and so forth. Only thing of this sort I've ever known to be done for a fangzine. You might like to put this detailed info in your 'zine somewhere for I doubt that there are many who'll know what'hell it's all about. Dmque: This is the Sabbatic Goat as envisioned by Eliphas Levi in his "Ritual of Transcendal Magic." He identifies it with the Baphomet of Mendes, and DOES NOT regard it as being connected with Black Magic, but as a "pantheistic and magical figure of the absolute.

Superimposed over the goat is the Double Seal of Solomon...one of the potent figures used in magical spells. This differs from the Great Seal of Solomon in several ways, one of which being that it doesn't include a second circle within the first, as does the Great Seal.

Notice the points of the stars....reading from the topmost, then to the left point below it, then to the right point opposite the left, and the two lower points (NOT the bottommost) are letters. Following these in the order given, and joining the segments, the word "Tetragrammaton" is found. In the four corners formed by the joining of the circle with the star points, are found the letters A G L A, also a word found prominently in these studies, and particularly pertaining to the diagrams and spells.

I hope you'll find this interesting enough to print, Jack, for otherwise, there will be too many people wondering what the hell is going on. I haven't gone into detailed description here, because there is too much involved in the rites of the Sabbat, especially involving the goat.....

Well, must get out of here for the nonce. Let me know how you like it, I feel that it is quite in line with what you want. Thanks a lot, and I hope you'll have this ish as fine as the last, at least!

Best Wishes,

David Crosser

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both by
George Jay Crawford

"The oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear, and the oldest and strongest fear is fear of the Unknown..." -----H.P.L.

EDITORIALLY SPEAKING page 4

A MATTER OF TASTE

I am not in the habit of reviewing fanzines -- especially fanzines who have had issues out since the one in question. I am, however, going to talk on a fanzine published in December, 1960. Because it is a matter of taste.

In the sarcastically named "Christmas" issue of YANDRO, was a story by Mike Deckinger. It suggested boldly something rather sickening.

A young girl is resting by a tree while her husband is in town on some unspecified business. A beggar comes along, assaults, and rapes her. She is too ashamed to tell this to her husband, but when she discovers that she is pregnant she decides to invent a tale. The girl is, of course, Mary, and the husband Joseph.

Now, it is our opinion that a person may choose to believe in a God (and if so, the one of his choice) or he may choose to disbelieve. Regardless of which the individual chooses, it is his business and no one else's. Mr. Coulson (editor of YANDRO), in a letter in our last issue, stated that many of his readers were of various religions. He also came out as us for insulting a religion (a charge not quite true). YET HE NOW PUBLISHES IN HIS OWN 'ZINE, ONE WITH A FINE HISTORY AND REPUTATION, A STINGING BLOW AND PERSONAL INSULT TO EVERY ONE OF HIS CHRISTIAN READERS, and also to anyone with a sense of morals and ethics. We were merely taken the wrong way -- he was printed a deliberate violation of the standard of morals and ethics (particularly ethical) which places us above a beast. Perhaps he thinks we are beasts (Mr. Deckinger sure does!). This is his opinion. But in this matter of taste, it is not a question of belief at all, or, that is, belief in God. It is a question of belief in our code of morals and ethics!

Mr. Coulson has done something that I, as a human being, am revolted by., and one which shows Mr. Coulson's true character. Whether he believes in the Christian philosophy or not, by his own admission you should not be partial, neither should you be insulting to anyone's beliefs. As a human being he should have respected those beliefs. Anyone with any true human decency would have returned the manuscript to Mr. Deckinger with his vomit still on it.

As for Mr. Deckinger: he has often proclaimed his atheistic views. As a matter of fact, in his own way, he has published, written, and backed anything and everything that is in any way connected with atheism and digs at religion. He has often attempted to point out paradoxes and different forms of evil either in the name of a church or in some way connected with a church -- particularly Christian. These things happen. Sure. But who's discussing religious philosophy? I'm discussing a reviling manuscript sent in by the most religious person I have ever come across... Mike Deckinger. You don't need a God to be religious. Or do you? For Mr. Deckinger is not content with having his own beliefs, but sets himself up as his own God -- a God who will have no other Gods before him. He is compelled to tear them down, he is a fanatic serving himself, his God, in the name of atheism. Only a religious man is a fanatic, and few religious men are fanatics. There is not, has not, will and can never be a fanatical atheist. The atheist, as Mr. Chichester points out in the lettercolumn, either keeps his feelings to himself or sets and attempts to accomplish his own goals. He does not go about attempting to tear down beliefs

that people have just as much a right to as he has to not believe. Hence, we have Deckinger's Paradox, a thing I am incapable of solving.

Listen--it's not whether you believe in God or not, but how you act while you're here. Fendon digs at religion often, and I seldom object. But when two persons (sic) such as Messrs. Coulson and Deckinger can not conduct themselves as human beings, they can not certainly be called fit members of the human race.

CONCERNING "THE LURKER AT THE THRESHOLD"

My first inkling of an error in Dr. Keller's portion of NOTES ON LOVECRAFT devoted to this novel came when he attributed it to Lovecraft -- indeed, Derleth, in SOME NOTES ON H.P. LOVECRAFT (Arkham, 1959) stated that less than 1200 words were written by Lovecraft -- a portion less than two pages in length and relating only one background scene. The novel was, then, almost solely Derleth's. Dr. Keller's only real complaint about the book was that the two professors were able to seal the opening to Outside without any interference from Yog-Sothoth, The Lurker at the Threshold, who was clearly there. Upon re-reading the book, I find this objection groundless, if approached logically and with a little imagination. 1)-Yog-Sothoth had to return because Dewart/Billington and Quamus could not afford to keep it in the third dimension, for maintaining control, for keeping out meddlers, and mainly because the old monster had no love for either of them and it had to be sent back as a safety precaution. 2)-it obviously didn't live in the tower, but in the fourth dimension (the fourth dimension was deduced by three things--first, the window, which was shaped to see into the next dimension--which had to be the fourth; second, because of the accessibility of the opening it had to be an adjacent dimension; and thirdly, because the Old Ones were unaffected by time. Why? Because they lived in it and in it alone.) and that the tower's roof was an interdimensional passageway. In order to open the passageway, a summons, consisting of odd vocal sounds, had to be issued. Since both Dewart and Quamus were shot and killed before they could complete the summons, the way was not yet open for the Old One to come through. Only a portion of the passageway had been cleared--clearly not enough for the thing to get through, or, as Dr. Keller points out, Sothoth would have certainly taken care of the two meddlers. Only enough to that visual contact between the dimensions had been established along with, perhaps, a slight opening which, since the Old One would try to force himself through, would account for the smell. But it was not open enough. So all the Old One could do was to struggle vainly while its nemesis in the form of the two professors sealed the Opening and gave it quite a shock with that Elder Sign! Therefore, when seen in this light Dr. Keller has no case.

Another note: In the 4 separate editions containing THE OUTSIDER that I own, none go beyond, as Dr. Keller says, the point where the narrator touches the smooth surface of finely polished glass. Another objection gone. The last chapter of INNSMOUTH could have been left out, but was added, and quite effectively, for shock value. We do, incidentally, disagree entirely with the article, but print it for others to consider.

OUR TITLE

MIRAGE is our permanent title. No more title changes. This is the final and completely permanent name of the magazine! With thanks to Gene Tipton for thinking it up and sending it in, along with a passel of stories!

-JLC

What is a poem? A tale that
rhymes? A series of inconse-
quential lyrics? Nancy thought
so, before she knew of

THE POEMS OF PAN

By Ray Nelson

— courtesy NFFF Manuscript —
Bureau

Nancy leaned over Jack's shoulder and poured his coffee, enjoying the warm tingle that went through her as her breasts brushed against him. With a gesture of annoyance, he waved her away.

"God, honey, no more coffee! I'm going to be late to class as it is," he growled.

She flinched, as if given a physical slap in the face, then muttered "I'll get your coat."

"It's too hot for a coat," said Jack, gathering up his books.

She thought desperately to herself "Oh, Jack, don't you know? I just want an excuse to grasp my hands on your fine, young arms. I just want to touch you. That's all."

Jack walked briskly toward the door of the apartment, deep in thought on the hard day at college ahead.

"Wait!" she cried aloud. "Aren't you going to kiss your little wife goodbye?"

"Gee, honey, I'll be late -- Oh, all right."

He barely touched his lips to hers, not even bothering to put down his books, then turned and left.

Very slowly, Nancy closed the door. Very slowly she cleared away the breakfast dishes and piled them in the sink. "Only married one year and already he doesn't want me," he pouted. "He's so cruel, but I guess he can't help it. He's only a boy, a little boy 6 years younger than me," Nancy didn't cry, although she certainly felt like it. She was still his wife, and there was work to be done. For one thing, they needed groceries.

Abstractly, she stared out the window at the vast spread of Berkeley below, and the Golden Gate Bridge showing majestically, its bright orange color reflecting the sun across the bay. "Jack's right," she mused, "it is too warm for a coat."

She picked up her handbag and walked down the stairs into a blazing late autumn sunshine. Carefully she put her hand against her thigh to keep her skirt from blowing up as the wind tugged and clawed at her hair and plastered her peasant blouse tight against her bosom. The hills were steep, but somehow she always liked to walk to market.

As she crossed a quiet, empty street she saw, ahead of her, a man leaning against a Eucalyptus tree and watching her. Nancy was aware that she was a beautiful woman, and hence was used to being stared at, but there was something rather different about this particular man. She stared back.

He was tall, sun-browned, and had a face that seemed cut to the effect of exotic mystery by a sculptor not quite human. Black hair he had, with a touch of grey above the ears, and his eyes seemed as deep and wise, yet as savage as a cat's. When she was nearly abreast of him, he spoke, in a kind, gentle voice.

"Hello. May I walk with you?" he asked. She laughed with surprise, but did not feel particularly embarrassed. After all, what could happen to her on a public road in broad daylight?

"Sure. Come along." she replied.

He fell in step beside her with a liquid gracefulness that few women and almost no men ever master. "Where are we going?" he asked.

"I don't know where you're going," she replied, laughing, "but I'm going down to the grocery to get a few things for the inner me."

"How drab," he said, wrinkling his nose in mock disgust. "I'm going to the forest on the top of a hill and think poetry."

"You're going to what?" gasped Nancy.

"Think poetry. My poems are too personal to be written down. I could only tell them to someone I loved and who loved me."

"You are a queer bird! What's your name?"

"Pan." said the man, without hesitation.

"Is that your first or last name?"

"My only name. It's taken from the name of an ancient Greek God of nature and sexual lust."

Nancy stared at him, wide-eyed.

"I don't know whether I should talk to you or not, Mister," she said. "You tell me your right name or you can go your own way right here and now!"

He grinned and looked deep into her eyes. "Pan" he said again.

"Oh, you're hopeless, Mister -- Pan!" she giggled.

For a while they walked in silence. Suddenly, she asked "Why did you say 'Hallo.' to me back there?"

"I wanted to hear the sound of your voice," he answered, "so that I could put it into a poem."

"Hmm..." said Nancy, vastly amused, "What sort of a poem?"

"A love poem to you."

She giggled again and glanced at him out of the corner of her eye to see whether he was making fun of her. He seemed as serious as an owl.

"Here's a fine, charming sort of a man," she thought. "Why couldn't I have married someone like him instead of a little boy like Jack? This guy looks like he's lived -- like he knows his way around." For some reason she did not bother to understand, she then remembered the disappointment of the first night with Jack -- his fumbling inexperience, his damned childish vulgarity, his unconscious cruelty. And yet, she loved him.

"Do you like that sort of an animal?" inquired Mister Pan, interrupting her train of thought and pointing down at the sidewalk.

"What?" said Nancy, looking down where he pointed. A little lizard without a tail was crawling across the concrete, lifting first one tiny leg and then the other with infinite care.

"Ugh!" she shuddered, clutching Mister Pan's arm.

"Come," he smiled, stepping into the street, "We'll walk around it."

"Say," said Nancy, as they returned to the sidewalk some distance beyond the offending reptile, "You were a lot nicer about that than Jack would've been." She paused, thinking of Jack, and laughed a deep womanly laugh. "Why, he'd have picked up that awful thing and chased me with it, I'll bet."

"Who is Jack?" asked Mister Pan, taking hold of the hand Nancy had not bothered to withdraw from his arm.

"Why, my husband." she replied.

"I should have known," he said, sighing deeply, "that a woman as beautiful as you would not be allowed to remain single."

They walked on together, laughing and talking like lifetime friends, and it was not until they had almost reached the top of the

hills that Nancy remembered her shopping.

"My goodness!" she cried. "I almost forgot! I've got work to do! Oh, Mister Pan, it's been such fun, but I really must be going. Won't you tell me your real name and address so that I can see you again?"

Mister Pan arched his majestic eyebrows in annoyance of having his pleasant little chat shattered by such gross, material things. "You can shop after you have seen my woods and my hill!" he snorted, but added more gently "It is not much farther. Since you have already come this far, it would indeed be a shame to miss it."

"Oh, all right, but I can't stay long!" she said.

At the end of a winding dead-end street stood a tall, steep cliff, topped by dark, cool-looking stands of pine, eucalyptus, oak, and other familiar trees. Climbing the cliff was difficult and Mister Pan put his arm around Nancy to keep her from slipping. She felt a warm rush of pleasure at the strength of that arm and leaned against him -- more, perhaps, than was needful. At the top of the cliff she turned and took a long look out over the maze of white stucco, tile roofs, and wide-angled roads that made up the city. There was the bay, twinkling like ground glass in the sun. A sleeping little fat man of a hill, marked in giant white letters "ALBANY," lay beside the bay, and a window in Oakland flashed brilliantly with reflected sunlight.

"Oh Mister Pan! What a view! I can see why this would be such a good place for poems!" gasped Nancy in awe.

"This is not the best place for poems," he said softly. "The best place is in the Cathedral."

"The Cathedral?"

"Come, I'll show you."

He led her into the forest, his arm held tightly around her waist. The Cathedral was beautiful indeed. The treetops that formed its ~~eb~~iling thrashed high above them with the wind, but on the needle-padded floor of the forest all was silence and warmth and calm beauty. As they walked down the aisle of trees and listened to the distant wind, Nancy felt as if they were all alone, the only people on the earth.

"This is the altar of the Cathedral," said Mister Pan softly, almost in a whisper, as he sat down against a moss-covered rock at the end of the aisle. Nancy sat beside him, feeling all the cares and worries of everyday life slowly fading into the deep, silent peace around her. The pine needles made a soft, cool seat, and she was more comfortable, more at ease, than she had ever been before in her life. For a long time she sat there, leaning against the arm of Mister Pan and not thinking of a thing. After a while, she noticed that Mister Pan was watching her intently.

"What are you looking at me like that for?" asked Nancy, in a bare-

ly audible whisper.

"I am composing my poem to you," he replied, ever so softly.

"Tell it to me," she murmured.

"Didn't I tell you," he whispered, "that I could tell my poems only to someone who loved me?"

"You can tell them --- to me," said Nancy, with a low, warm burr in her voice.

He leaned over and looked into her eyes, grave and searchingly. She could feel her heartbeat quicken in the silence.

The wind changed suddenly and a strong gust came rushing up the aisle, blowing Nancy's skirt up to where the hem of her pink underclothes showed for a second.

"Oh!" she cried, pulling her skirt down again and blushing deeply. While her hands were busy securing her dress below her knees, Mister Pan leaned over and suddenly kissed her.

"Oh no!" she gasped against his lips, "Don't!"

His arms slipped around her and he drew their bodies tightly against each other, kneading her like bread dough with his long, powerful fingers. She raised her hands to fight him off, but as soon as she released her skirt the wind whipped it even higher than before. Desperately she tried to hide her legs and fight Mister Pan at the same time, but oh! he was strong and oh! the wind was wild and oh! what was the use? She gave up both efforts and relaxed.

Mister Pan took his lips from hers and held her firmly but gently, his hands moving over her with a slow, tender urgency, prossing, caressing, petting -- until white hot desire rose in her uncontrollably. With a little animal cry, half joy, half anguish, she dug her fingers into his shoulders and, summoning every ounce of strength in her, pulled him close, writhing and twisting, against him. For a long time there was no sound save the rustle of cloth in the pine needles and the strained breathing of two wild animals in heat.

Suddenly, it was over.

The word had died, but Nancy's skirt still draped loose above her hips. She lay motionless with her mouth slightly open, breathing deeply. Her eyes were closed. Slowly she opened them and smoothed down her skirt. As her heart slowed and her breath came more easily she laid her head on Mister Pan's chest and rested, listening to a bird singing somewhere near. Mister Pan buried his face in her hair, softly brushing her ear with a kiss.

"Now tell me the poem," she whispered after a little while.

"All poems are not in words," he whispered. "My poems, the purest

of all poetry, are composed of nothing but wordless emotions."

She started. "THAT? That was the poem?" she asked in sudden realization.

"Yes," answered Pan, smiling faintly.

She looked up at him thoughtfully for a long time, then, in a low, trembling, womanly voice, she said "I think it was a lovely poem." Then she kissed him tenderly for several minutes.

"It has been a thousand years since....but sleep now, my darling." He said.

She lapsed into an exhausted, yet dream-laden sleep.

When she awoke, he was gone, and she was not at all sure it hadn't been a dream. She got up, brushed herself off, and hurried away, never noticing the small, strange footprints leading away into the forest. Very strange footprints indeed.

Like a two-legged goat.

"It is said that on a certain day of the year the Gods don human form and go about the world of men in search of something; however the object of the search no human has ever learned."

—BLACK RITUALS by Peter Frost

-----THE END-----

JOURNEYRISQUES

Men thinks to propagato himself
On some distant moon,
And is sending up his little toys
Hoping to find soon
A road to these high places that
Shall lead him away,
From the river of his present splashing
To some elysian day.
He has muddled up the stream of life
With his filth and mire,
Now he seeks to spoil the planets,
And to quench their brilliant fire.
He may succeed, no one knows,
No one can really tell.
But in reaching for the moon and stars
He may go to hell.

—George Jay Crawford

NOTES ON

DAVID H. KELLER, M.D., (1880-) is a native of Pennsylvania and presently resides in Stroudsburg. He was a frequent contributor to Weird Tales, Amazing, and others and has had a number of published books, among them Tales from Underwood (Arkham), a collection of his best shorts, and The Sign of the Burning Hart. His work has been widely anthologized. In 1948 Searle's Fantasy Commentator published a remarkable essay entitled Shadows Over Lovecraft, which explored the psychological aspect of both the man and his work. Being a psychiatrist since 1914, he was able to write his ideas well, although the piece was pounced upon by others in the field as full of mistakes. Now Dr. Keller gives us a never before published follow-up to that famed essay, in which the inaccuracies of Lovecraft's works are explored with thoroughness.

LOVECRAFT

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DAVID H. KELLER, M.D.

Lovecraft wrote horror tales.

The plots came from his subconscious -- he had to write them. Once he thought of a tale he could not rest until it was placed on paper. Soon after he wrote Finis one more fantastic horror story would rise within him and his literary Daemon would force him to keep on writing.

The lands he wrote of in the Arctic, Australia, and the Pacific were filled with monolithic buildings erected millions of years ago by giant monstrosities who had come to the earth from other planets. On the walls of these buildings were obscene pictures which told the history of past ages. These visitors from the void brought with them images carved from stone which no geologist has ever found on earth. It was thought that they were carved in the likeness of the giants who had erected the massive buildings. These images were worshipped by degenerate people who often met in secret places to pray for the return of the Great Gods.

In his story, The Call of Cthulhu, he gives several descriptions of

these idols. One was found in the swamps of Louisiana.

"The figure.....was between seven and eight inches in height and of exquisitely artistic workmanship. It represented a monster of vaguely anthropoid outline but with an octopus-like head whose face was a mass of feelers, a scaly, rubbery-looking body, prodigious claws on hind and fore feet, and long, narrow wings behind. The thing, which seemed instinct with a fearsome and unnatural corpulence, ..squat on a rectangular block or pedestal with undecipherable characters. The tip of the wings touched the back edge of the block,....The cephalopod head was bent forward...the aspect of the whole was abnormally lifelike and the more subtly fearsome because its source was unknown. Its vast, awesome, and incalculable age was unmistakable. It did not belong to civilization's youth -- or, indeed, any other time. Its very material was a mystery; for the soapy, greenish-black stone with its golden or iridescent flecks resembled nothing familiar to geology or mineralogy."

Such were the idols which the degenerates worshipped. Most of them were illiterate but occasionally a brilliant man became the leader of a group who often met to call upon their god Cthulhu. Some of them wrote religious books, the most famous being the NECRONOMICON by the mad Arab Abdul Alhazred.

In his fancied New England scenes Lovecraft pictured decaying towns, dirty streets, unpainted houses with leaking roofs and broken windows. Here men and women lived for many decades, each generation becoming more degenerate because of in-breeding. The fences were broken, the meadows sickly green, large oak trees were decaying and the sun never shone. The only birds that sang were the wipoorwills which gathered in great numbers to carry the souls of the dead to Lethe. These communities were rarely visited by normal people. In these places were the cults of old God worshippers who longed for the return of the former rulers to earth.

Such was the material Lovecraft used for many of his stories. The plots were somewhat similar with minor variations. In many places old Gods lived awaiting an opportunity to kill the human race. Each had a group of degenerates willing to help them escape from their prisons. Always there were one or more heroes who successfully fought the Old Gods and, for the time, saved humanity from destruction. Often their

experiences were so terrible that they became insane.

In telling these tales Lovecraft used dark words to a perfection never attained by any other author. In his effort to convey the terror he must have felt he not only used such words singly but combined them: "Lurking fear; strange horror; unnatural annals; ghoulishly haunted." He frequently arranged them in trio: "dead men's skulls; nightmare creeping death; fearsome secret places; horribly mangled chewed." At times he even wrote a short paragraph composed of them: "There was the bursting of an exploding bladder; a shulay nastiness of a cloven sunfish; a stench as of a thousand opened graves, and a sound that could not be put on paper; The ship was befouled by a venomous seething astern where the spattered plasticity of that nameless sky spawn was nebulously combining in its hateful, original form."

It would be interesting to read all of Lovecraft's tales and make a list of the dark words he uses and the number of repetitions. This would give the youthful writer of horror tales a very complete vocabulary.

In his Notes on Writing Weird Fiction (contained in the o.p. book MARGINALIA) Lovecraft writes:

"Prime emphasis should be given to subtle suggestion -- Avoid bald catalogues of incredible happenings."

He fails to do this by his constant use of dark words. He leaves nothing to the reader's imagination. I can best explain my reaction by describing the road in the Southwest between Albuquerque and Grants, New Mexico. A desolate country borders this road; in the desert are rattlesnakes and large carnivora. If the authorities acted wisely they would erect a large sign at each entrance to this country.

TOURIST. STOP AND READ.
You are now entering a dangerous
desert. Drive fast. Stay on the
highway. Do not enter a side road
for there you will find deadly
snakes and man-eating panthers.

All who read these signs would be filled with fear of the unknown. Their imagination would run riot. No matter how fast they drove they would imagine a rattlesnake under every bush, a panther or mountain lion in every ravine. There would be a constant illusion of imminent danger.

Is it that kind of road? No. Every half mile there is a large sign advertising a snake house or museum of wild life. Visit one and for the cost of only 25¢ you can see a dozen varieties of snakes, reptiles, and carnivora. Years ago a young girl was bitten by a rattlesnake and died. You can see that identical snake at widely separated museums. At 6 places you can look at the only pack of lobo wolves in America. The dangers of the desert, the mysterious dwellers of the wild, are captured and can be inspected safely. There is no need for fear -- the horror of the unknown desert is gone; every danger having been captured and now being exhibited in museums. There they cause no terror. Noth-

ing has been left to the imagination. That all-important illusion of the terrible unknown has been eliminated.

Lovecraft has duplicated this treatment of the road in his stories. He takes us into an unknown desert, filled with weird people, many dangers, and the Old Gods waiting to destroy mankind. But instead of allowing the reader to exercise his imagination, he collects all his horrors and places them in museums where they are carefully listed and described. He writes of them in a very definite language, making use of all the dark words in the dictionary and occasionally inventing new ones. Suspense is lacking as the story develops. In some stories he repeats the same dreadful adjective so often that it loses its power. If, in a small forest community the cry of "Wolf!" is heard the doors are bolted and every rifle loaded. But if "Wolf!" is cried a hundred times a day the forest dwellers cease to fear.

The Old Gods must have been very powerful and highly intelligent; they were able to come from distant planets and erect very large buildings in Arabia, Australia, and Antarctica. One of the massive castles was used as a prison for Cthulhu when he was conquered by the younger gods. Occasionally the gods escaped but were always circumvented by a hero. It seems evident that while writing his tales Lovecraft saw himself as the hero; many authors, such as Howard, vicariously shone in the limelight. In at least one tale, The Shunned House, Lovecraft and his uncle take important parts.

In the conflict between the Old Gods and the heroes, use is made of modern science mixed with knowledge obtained by reading the "forbidden" books. Yet the heroes could never win had it not been for the evident inability of the Old Gods to recognize the dangers facing them and the ability to finally conquer. At times they seem absolutely stupid. I realize that they had to be overcome to save the human race, but it seems that Lovecraft often does not use his scientific knowledge to fight them. I will give a few examples involving both the evident inability of the Old Gods and Lovecraft's inept scientific instruments of warfare.

In The Dunwich Horror, a son of Yog-Sothoth and an earth woman grows to mammoth size and begins to devastate the country, killing families and cattle. When he moved over the mountains he could not be seen but crushed trees and vegetation showed his pathway. Three scientists study the old "forbidden" books and learn words which they hope will destroy him. They also create a powder which, when sprayed over the monster's invisible body, also aid in killing him. Now, armed with "a metal sprayer of the kind used in combatting insects" they walk to "a topmost ridge, level with the altar where the Old Gods had been worshipped," but "at a considerable distance from it." They hope that the monster which, from its tracks, is evidently "bigger than a barn" will move towards this altar stone. He does so and they can see trees break as he moves over them.

Now they start saying the words and spraying the powder towards the invisible monster. Immediately a bolt of lightning strikes him; he becomes visible, and through a telescope the observers see that he has a human face. He calls on his father, Yog Sothoth, to help him and

at once melts into a sliny mass with an "indescribable odor." Now, I am willing to accept the power of words but I have worked with a powder-sprayer in our rose garden and know that the dust can not possibly go more than six or eight feet. It could not have gone "a considerable distance" and have such disastrous results. Lovecraft had, again, to destroy this monster but his methods were most unscientifico.

In THE LURKER AT THE THRESHOLD (Arkhan, 1945. o.p.) Yog Sothoth is imprisoned in a stone tower which has an opening at the top covered by one small stone. The stone is not heavy but evidently sufficient to keep the old god in captivity. In spite of his great power there is no evidence that he ever tried to push it aside. One of his worshippers removes the stone and now the god is no longer a prisoner. He emerges from the tower, kills the men near it; he threatens the entire community, even the entire world, but at irregular intervals (and for no apparent reason) he returns to the tower. A scientist, determined to save the human race, accompanied by a friend, goes to the tower with a bag of cement. They kill a man who has started worshipping the god, and an Indian who has lived for several hundred years. They replace the stone and fasten it with cement.

In the meantime this Old God, highly intelligent and very powerful, does not react to the noise of the revolvers, and he certainly seems to be unaware or at least indifferent to the work of cementing the stone. He has the strength to move the stone, which is small and held by still wet, soft cement. He could come out at any time and kill the heroes. Instead he seems content to remain in the tower while the stone seems to hold him like a cork in a bottle. Once again the human race is saved from destruction. This Old God acts like an idiot and the manner in which he allows himself to be conquered seems to be utter nonsense.

In The Shunned House a monster lives in the dirt in the cellar. For one hundred years all who live in this house die in a mysterious manner. Finally, a Dr. Whipple and his nephew determine to spend the night in the cellar of the house. The young man sees the vague outline of a half-human monster rise from the dirt of the cellar floor and destroy the doctor and burn his body. However, it fails to even notice the young man who is determined to avenge his uncle. He returns the next night with a spade, a shovel, and six carboys of sulphuric acid. He starts digging into the dirt floor and finally locates the body of the monster who is either asleep or indifferent to the digging. For 100 years this monster has killed all living within the house. The night before he killed an old man. And yet, this night he makes no effort to protect himself! Even when all the dirt has been shoveled off of its body it appears to be unaware of the danger! The young man leaps from the hole and empties all the sulphuric acid on the exposed body. He then fills the pit with dirt. There is little doubt that this monster, like all of Lovecraft's creations, was very powerful and intelligent, but he certainly acted like an idiot.

In The Call of Cthulhu a race of the very old Gods build a monolithic city in the Pacific. Cthulhu is conquered by a new race of Gods and made a prisoner in his home. He remains there for twenty trillion

years during which an earthquake submerges, but does not destroy, it. Finally a second earthquake raises part of the city again above the surface of the water. Captain Johnson, his mate and 6 seamen in a small steamship, see the uncharted island-mountain and decide to land and explore it. They walk to the top of the mountain and find what seems to be a door with a number of knobs on it. After pressing on a variation of knobs they finally hit on the right combination -- and the door opened. Now the Very Old God, after waiting 20 trillion years, was no longer captive. He comes through the door and kills the 6 seamen. The captain and mate run to the shore, row to the ship, and start to steam away. The God, standing on the shore, sees them and enters the water to destroy them and finally go all around the world and destroy mankind. He swam, and the captain sees that he'll soon overtake the steamer, so he turned around and rammed it. Looking back, they see that they've cut the God in two, but is reforming. Soon he looks as good as he had been.

There was nothing to keep him from now killing the two men, yet, for some reason he was content to his home, back to the mountain, and in through the door. Through some clever imagination of Lovecraft the door closes on him, just in time. Once more an earthquake lowers the island. This is the third time Lovecraft has used an earthquake to save the human race. He ends the story with Cthulhu still a prisoner, -- at least until another 'quake rises the city again and the door is again opened by ignorant seamen. Once again I am forced to say that I cannot believe this story.

Lovecraft writes of the importance of maintaining the semblance of reality. He thinks that the reader must believe the tale when reading it. His editors, Derrith and Wandrei, must have thought that The Outsider was his finest story. At least, they used it as the title to the first Lovecraft story omnibus (Arkham, 1939.op.). Many of the readers agree with them but I am unable to. The story contains too many incongruities which lessen the illusion which Lovecraft considered so important.

The being described lives in a deep, underground cave and has to depend upon candles for light -- yet we are not told how he obtained a supply of candles to last so many years nor how he learned to light them. He has a large library, in which he spends much time reading terrible books, but there is no explanation of how he learned to read. This raises a question: could a being, isolated from infancy, learn to read? I doubt it.

Finally, after long years, he starts to climb upwards through many rooms; at last he reaches the top of the tower and finds that he is on level ground. He walks through woods, past an old church, and then comes to a river, which he swims across without difficulty. I can believe that he was able to climb to the topmost turret of his former home. An animal can walk and climb without teaching. But I question his ability to swim a long distance.

He enters a castle where nobility is merry-making. They see him and start to scream. He cannot understand them since this is the first time he has heard a human voice. He doesn't understand why they scream.

He then sees a monster in the hallway, and goes over to it. Reaching out, he understands, for he touches the "cold, unyielding surface of polished glass." The story should end there! Instead he goes to Egypt and flies "with the mocking and friendly ghouls on the night wind." Just how he is able to fly without wings is never explained. At the very end a mention is made that he saw himself in the mirror and his realization that he is different from humans — an outsider.

This story leaves me cold, but it was written exactly as Lovecraft wanted to. The authors inability to end the story at the proper place perplexes me, but Lovecraft often seemed unable to do so. The same can be applied to THE SHADOW OVER INNSMOUTH. A long story in 5 parts, it should end with part four with the narrator finally escaping from Innsmouth. Instead, Lovecraft adds part 5, which consists of lines that seem to me entirely superfluous.

When a man writes much he develops a style which is often very individualistic. If true to himself he writes only in one way, and, when grandiose, like Poe, thinks that it is the best way to write. There is no doubt that Lovecraft followed this pattern. He worked hard over his manuscripts and made many revisions. All that the critic can say is that his stories are plotted and framed exactly as he meant them to be. These notes are not intended to cloud his ability to tell the horror tale in a way that has entertained many readers. I simply wished to examine his style, and instead of lauding them to show how they could have been much improved. And yet I realize that he could not have written them in any other way and still have remained the individual that he was.

--- DAVID HENRY KELLER

Witchinghilt Lamp

Cutting the Heavens with empty streak
Some fool thing speeds,
Is it some damned invention,
Or does it fill our needs?
Or is it some figment of imagination,
From a deranged brain?
Or is it pure and simple inspiration,
Striking this world again?
Dark sparks of that unknown region,
Beyond this world's atmosphere,
Lost in that well established realm,
as we are here.
Dire sins, curses black as witchcraft,
Ride upon scientific wing,
And all times imprecations congregate,
In the heart of this thing.

---George Jay Crawford



MYTHS

AND

LEGENDS

part one

BY

DONALD F. ANDERSON

The Island Legend of Crete

Lieing off the coast of Greece, just a little to the South-East, lies the small island of Crete. Once a mighty island empire doing trade with the powers of its time, Egypt and Assyria, it is now all but forgotten, an obscure hole in the Mediterranean. Its mythic kings and peoples are hard to remember, for little is left of their power. In the great palace at Knossos can be seen marks of flames and in the throne room an overturned vase with ritual vessells still lying there as if about to be used. The tales of Crete have come down to us only by Greek legend, and a few letters found in Egypt and Babylon. One of the most interesting of these concerns the great goddess Rhea.

In the beginning of time there was created the Earth, Gaia, and the vast skies above her to cover and wod her, Uranus. From this marriage sprang the twelve Titans and other such beasts and Uranus, terrified by them, shut them up in the bowels of the earth. Gaia vowed revenge when Uranus refused to release them, and sent her son, Cronus, to kill him. Cronus murdered Uranus in the night and the curse of his parent fell upon him. He knew that to remain safe was to remain childless, but he soon fell in love with Rhea and had 5 children. Cronus, in his fears, devoured each child as it was delivered. Finally, in desperation, Rhea went to her parents to seek advice, for she felt a new child in her. She was told to flee to Crete and there in a cave hidden away from the eyes of Cronus, she gave birth to a son, Zeus. She returned to her husband, and, to avert his suspicions, wrapped a stone in swaddling cloths, which he swallowed. Thus, Zeus grew up peacefully in the grove and sunny mountains of Crete.

Another of the legends of Crete is that of King Minos. Surely everyone has heard of Daedalus and his son Icarus who flew on wings of wax. But what of the rest of the tale?

King Minos ordered each year seven young maidens and seven young men to be sacrificed to the Minotaur, a half-bull, half-man, thing which lived in the labyrinth beneath the king's palace. But the king's daughter, Ariadne, fell in love with a Greek hero Theseus. She enlisted the aid of Daedalus and, at his suggestion, gave Theseus a thread to unravel behind him when he went to fight the Minotaur. Theseus slays the beast and returns safely by following the unravelled thread. The king is furious and suspects Daedalus of aiding, whereupon he and his son decide to fly from the island to escape the king's wrath. Daedalus constructs wings of birds feathers and wax, and before they start Icarus is warned not to fly too close to the sun, as it will melt the wax and he would fall into the sea. But Icarus disobeys his father, and sure enough, the sun melts the wax and he falls into the sea, which then bore his name -- Icarian. Daedalus flees to Sicily and the protection of Cocalus. The king, Minos, knew Daedalus was very vain and based his plan to capture his enemy on this. He wait from land to land carrying a spiral sea shell and a thread and offering a great reward to anyone who could get the thread into the shell. Finally Minos came to the court of Cocalus, King of Sicily. The wily king took the shell and gave it to Daedalus. He tied the thread to an ant and luring it by a drop of honey the ant walked through and threaded the shell.

(continued on page 29)

Fear of the dark is certainly one of the oldest fears of man since it is the vivid materialization of The Unknown. But is it not odd for a grown man of our modern world to fear the dark? And only a special kind of darkness?

BEWARE OF THE DARK!

by GENE TIPTON

A storm was building up in the summer night outside, as evidenced by sudden, intermittent gleams of light that were to be seen through the windows, and by low, heavy rumblings that sounded like the deep-toned growls of some aroused cosmic monster.

Three men sat within the living room of Rusby's bachelor home. At a luncheon meeting of the Hearthsides Club a few days earlier, Phillip Rusby, a new member of the club, had invited the two other men over that evening for the purpose of becoming better acquainted with them. The three were chatting at random.

A growing thunderstorm, perhaps, always suggests something of the ominous, and this may have helped to steer the conversation towards the subject now under discussion -- fear.

Abbot, a lawyer by profession, was speaking.

"Let's admit it. Man's overactive imagination accounts for most of his fears. So often we become victim to fears which are needless, even silly. Consider Napoleon's morbid fear of cats, for example, or take the composer, Anton Dvorak, who had an intense fear of thunderstorms all throughout his life. He probably wouldn't feel very comfortable tonight, eh?"

"Imaginary though many fears may be, their effects can be very real and tangible," contributed Kell, a physician, drawing with satisfaction on a cigar. "Fear can induce symptoms of physical illness in a person, even though no actual organic disease may be present. Fear can, among other things, raise the blood pressure, produce palpitation of the heart, bring on digestive disturbances, and upset hormonal balances in the body."

"In the opinion of you gentlemen, what would appear to be the most common, the most widespread fear?"

The query was voiced by Rusby, the host. He was perhaps the

oldest of the three men, if age can always be gaged by appearance. There was more grey than black in his thinning hair, and his creased face and stooped shoulders indicated a lengthy acquaintance with the vicissitudes of life.

"I'd say the fear of death would rank at the top," answered Kell unhesitatingly. "However, I may be biased. I suppose a member of my profession is exposed to death in a disproportionately large way."

"The fear of retribution would seem to be very great," pondered Abbot. "But I think I would pick the fear of darkness as being the most universal. Possibly, this would even embrace death itself. Most of us tend to associate death with darkness, so really we might think of death as a form of darkness. Who among us was not afraid of the dark as a child? I remember when I was a boy, the house in which we lived stood near a big empty lot that was covered by a dense thicket. Although it looked harmless enough by day, I imagined that all sorts of phantoms and monsters lurked in that thicket at night, and I always stayed away from the place after sundown."

Rusby had leaned forward in his chair, as if finding more than casual interest in Abbot's words.

"I'm inclined to agree with you," he said. "But let's not limit the fear of darkness to childhood. I once knew an adult who had an obsessive fear of the dark. It's been years since I've seen the man, but I have no doubts as to the fact that the fear torments him to this day. What's more, he most feared not darkness in general, but a particular kind of darkness."

"I'd like to hear more about this chap," invited Kell. "Sounds like it might have the makings of an interesting yarn."

"Yes, go on by all means," concurred Abbot.

So Rusby began to elaborate, as the intensity of the rumblings outside grew. His eyes fixed themselves upon flowered draperies across the room which swayed in a breeze coming through a partially opened window.

"The man of whom I speak was named Smith. He was a boyhood chum of mine, and the two of us grew up together down in the Kentucky Blue ridge country. On one occasion, when we were still small boys, he and I and some companions secretly made off for a nearby cave. Our parents had warned us to stay away from the place, but being intrepid adventurers, like all boys, we meant to do some exploring. Inside, with a supply of matches, we embarked on our little adventure. But, as luck would have it, Smith became separated from the group and got lost in some side passage. The rest of us made our way out all right, but Smith remained in the cave three days and three nights in pitch darkness before he was found."

Rusby paused to light up his briar pipe, then plunged anew into his story.

"As you probably have guessed, that incident made Smith abnormally sensitive to darkness. I don't believe he ever completely got over the experience. But his aversion to the dark did not grow into a phobia until some years later. When in our late teens, he and I were taking in a travelling carnival which had come into town. We were passing one of those fortune-tellers' tents when Smith, on an impulse, decided to go inside.

"Come on, let's go!" I urged him. "Surely you don't believe in those frauds."

"Aw, it's only a dollar, Phil," he persisted, "and who knows? Some gorgeous female with a millionaire father may be destined to come into my life."

"And with a six-foot-four husband," I added.

"Mostly to humor his whim, I followed Smith into the smelly tent. He paid his dollar, and the old Gypsy woman peered into her crystal ball for several minutes. Then she raised her wizened face and looked at my friend soberly. I'll never forget her words.

"From beginning to end, darkness is woven into the tapestry of every life. Darkness lies within the womb and within the tomb."

"I could tell that the strange words had quite an effect on Smith. His face turned deathly pale. He pressed the old woman to tell him more; to elaborate upon the cryptic statement. After more moments of crystal-gazing, she spoke again.

"I see only darkness -- a strange form of darkness -- in your world of tomorrow. Take heed! Beware of the dark. Beware especially of darkness created by light!"

"I gather this admonition added fuel to the fire," interposed Kell. "It must have served to build a moderate childhood fear into something of much greater proportions."

"But surely an intelligent person wouldn't have put much stock into the wild prattle of a Gypsy fortune-teller!" declared Abbot. "It was just coincidence that she happened to touch upon a matter to which he was already sensitive."

"Ah, but you haven't heard all of my story," smiled the narrator. "At that time, maybe I felt the same way myself. But my efforts to set Smith's mind at ease met with little success. Then, several months later, my friend told me of his wish to visit another fortune-teller.

"Why on earth do you want to throw away more money on those de-civers?" I asked him. "Wasn't one time enough?"

"I'm just curious, Phil," he replied. His face bore a serious, thoughtful expression. "I wonder what a second one would tell me. I seem to recall that one of those palmists recently set herself up in

a trailer over on Lincoln Avenue. Care to go along with me?"

"All right," I agreed reluctantly. "It's your money." So, in Smith's car we drove over to the trailer of the second Gypsy, and were admitted into the woman's small, cramped quarters. She took my friend's palm and studied it for a time, after which -- with a fair degree of accuracy, as I remember, -- she began to enumerate various character and personality traits. And then her voice became grave.

"Heed the tracings of destiny that are outlined in mortal flesh. In your future looms that which is to be feared. It lurks among the shadows -- and well it might, for darkness itself is the substance of this terror which lies in wait. Guard forever against the scourge of darkness -- beware of the dark! And seek greatest safety from darkness whose source is light."

"Smith didn't say a word, but only stared at the woman as if stricken. In a kind of daze he accompanied me to his car and drove directly to still another fortune teller, who delivered a third prophecy regarding his fate. And, gentlemen, believe it or not, it was identical to the first two!"

"That must have been the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back," supposed Kell, after a moment of comparative silence had lapsed, a hush broken only by the grumble of thunderclaps.

"Yes," said Rusby, nodding. "For the same warning to be given three times in a row -- that's carrying coincidence a bit too far, don't you think?"

"Well, from that time on, Smith was never quite the same person. His dread of the dark grew into an obsession. He would never set foot outdoors after nightfall. In his bedroom a light burned constantly at night. You couldn't drag him inside a theatre or movie-house, or any place that wasn't well-lighted. And he was forever puzzled -- often to the point of torture -- by the peculiar form of darkness mentioned in those warnings."

Kell repeated the enigmatical words musingly. "Beware of darkness created by light." It certainly is a queer sort of warning."

"Granting that there was anything to the dire predictions, your friend could have misinterpreted them," mused Abbot. "Maybe it was figurative, not literal, darkness that was to blight his life. The darkness of sin, for example. Or the darkness of failure. Or the ultimate darkness to be found in death. In any event, it just occurred to me how darkness could be created by light. Why, a flash of lightning could knock out the power lines right now, and we would find ourselves sitting in pitch darkness --"

Both guests looked curiously at Rusby, who reacted in strange fashion to that last statement. He started in his chair, and his face paled visibly. Both Abbot and Kell thought they could make out a brief flicker of panic-like fear in the eyes of their host.

"What's the matter?" frowned the physician.

Abbot regarded Phillip Rusby with a critical, searching intentness for a moment. Gradual insight and discernment spread over the attorney's features.

"Rusby," he said softly, "something tells me that your friend Smith is right here in this room, sitting in the same chair as yourself."

The nod of affirmation Rusby gave was so slight as to be almost imperceptible. He let out a long, tired, sigh as if unspeakably weary from combatting the onerous fear that had for so long plagued him.

The long-gathering storm had broken; wind and rain were lashing the house with vehemence. Arising, Rusby walked across the room to the now wildly fluttering draperies, and firmly lowered the window sash. He remained there, looking out into the storm-ridden night. The rain-filled darkness was frequently pricked by erratic thrusts of light. The two men still sitting could fancy that Rusby forced his eyes to meet that all-pervading mass of darkness only through a great summoning of courage. His was an almost rebellious attitude. He seemed to be defying the darkness as a small and defenseless boy stands up to the neighborhood bully who had long dominated him.

At that instant a great explosion of light enveloped the room, penetrating with noon-day brilliance into its every corner. Attendant to the dazzling light was a bombardment of sound: the deep-throated, resounding voice of thunder blended with the higher-pitched crystalline sound of shattering glass. The figure standing before the window threw his hands across his face, emitting a sharp outcry of pain.....

It was later in the evening. A peaceful calm, devoid of all tension, now filled the night. The storm which had earlier been rampant had moved on, and was now venting its fury elsewhere.

Pausing before one of the hospital wards, Kell, now white-jacketed and displaying a brisk, professional air borne of many years spent in such environs, beckoned for Abbot to enter. The physician spoke briefly with a nurse who emerged from the room, then joined the attorney. Their attention became focused on the occupant of one of the beds -- a new patient whose face was swathed in bandages.

The two wordlessly regarded the figure. Low, fearful murmuring cries came from the recumbent form. They were sounds such as a frightened child might utter in the dead of night, seeking refuge from specter-haunted shadows.

"Poor fellow," commiserated the physician when the two had left the room. "His face was cut up pretty badly by that window glass. Strange, isn't it, that lightning should have struck that window pane at that precise moment? The disfiguring scars that will be left aren't the worst of our friend's troubles. Thanks to those flying fragments of glass, Rusby is totally blind. The darkness he feared so much has at last come upon him

--Gene Tipton.

HINDSIGHT! a LETTER COLUMN

NOTE

After the publication of the last issue we were besieged by letters, some good, some bad, all offering criticism. We are followers of Phillip Wylie's philosophy: "Without criticism, there would be no progress." Hence, the more letters and the more letters of criticism, the happier we are. We publish at a great loss of both time and money, so if there are no letters, we might as well not publish, for we gain nothing. And so, please do not be discouraged because this present issue's lettercolumn is small due to lack of money to expand the size of the 'zine. PLEASE send in your letters of comment and criticism, egoboo or no. If we aren't blasted it makes us unhappy.

Major W.S. Chichester :
506 Springvale Drive :

AN L.O.C. ON THE L.O.C.'s !

San Antonio 27, Texas ; Your cover is very effective. A wonderful drawing by Prosser. Of course, the story by Lovecraft is wonderful and illustrates the cover quote perfectly. His ancient biblical, style of writing also adds to the spell woven by the story. I must say that the story by St. John certainly created a horrible and fearful mood. I was caught in its web and scarcely noticed the imperfections of grammar and sentence structure. However, copy editing IS needed. As usual, I liked the letters which were a carry-over from CENTAUR. I often enjoy lettercolumns more than the pieces in a magazine. Evidently this "Dismissing the Gostak" was of a controversial nature. Good! As an atheist, I feel we should emphasize the positive aspects of atheism, rather than announce we are atheists and then glare belligerently around the room waiting for someone to challenge our credo. Witness Poul Shingleton's outburst. Instead, I prefer to tell people that I believe in the Golden Rule, most of the laws of Moses, most of the principles expressed in the Sermon on the Mount, in the existence of Jesus, in the family, decency to others, etc., but that I do not believe that the injection of a supernatural being, or beings, or existence of heaven or hell, will ADD anything at all towards the goal of peace on earth, good will towards men. In brief, the real atheist feels about ethics and morals in much the same way as a "religionist." However, the atheist thinks man should be more occupied with the troubles of man and less involved with his gods, who are not at all necessary to create a good ethical doctrine by which man may live in peace, honor, dignity, and righteousness. ((This may be true, but knowing human nature, do you honestly think man -- any man -- could ever stick to such a code?-ed.)) So far the atheist seems to have the lessons of history all on his side. Unfortunately, the atheist is known only as some sort of negative personality, who denies EVERYTHING. This is certainly not true as my thoughts above have pointed out. In fact, our freedom of thought on this subject (inherited from the early Greeks) SAVES us from subservience to priestly hierarchy, "infallible divine revelations," traditional creeds, and rigid ritualistic forms. ((You seem to be typifying the churches in much the same way as you accuse them of typifying the atheist. I know of many churches which are excellent when

speaking in your terms of "man's duty to man." Also, there are several which have cut religious dogma to the bare minimum, doing only what was discribed in the Bible. Be careful. Don't make yourself guilty of the same crime that you accuse them of! -ed.}} We can seek human betterment, not institutionalism. Thus, as Socrates said, "We are free to follow the argument wherever it leads."

Well, I'll be looking forward to the next issue, which I hope will be called MIRAGE. Keep up the good work!

{{It would seem to me that athiesm is divided into as many sects as is religion. Mossts, Deckinger and Shingleton, take note!}}

.....

Harry Warner, Jr. : HARRY WARNER IN THE MIDDLE

423 Summit Avenue :
Hagerstown, Maryland; I want to thank you for your kindness in sending me
..... an issue of KALEIDOSCOPE. I'm too old and jaundiced
to subscribe to fanzines, but maybe I can give you some comments, which
will be about halfway between the eruption from Redd Boggs and the com-
fort from John Berry in the last lettercolumn. Of course, I can't tell
how much of an improvement over the first issue this is, but it seems
like a good accomplishment viewed by itself. The mincography is better
than average; only a few pages are bothered very much by typographical
errors, and you certainly seem enthusiastic enough and willing to take
advice. I don't object to the lack of fannish material, either, because
this is the sort of contents I cut my fannish teeth on. In fact, the
whole fanzine is a pleasant reminder of what many publications used to
be like, back in the early 40s. It was also interesting to re-read Love-
craft's story. This is probably the first time I've re-read anything by
HPL in eight or ten years and I'd been wondering how he would impress me
at this late date. I find that he can still interest me, although it
seems odd that this particular writer should have become the center of
a cult of admirers that specialize in his works. I would think that it
would be easier to grow tired of his fiction if read too often than that
of almost every other fantasy writer. {{I can't say I agree with you, but
you might take note that almost every other fantasy writer (that is, of
the modern fantasy school) had a large association with Lovecraft. He is
responsible, directly and indirectly, for the bulk of good fantasy. The
cult you mention springs not so much from his works as from the man him-
self, you will find. -ed.}} However, I still can't approve of little items
about his eccentricities like the one that follows the story. So much has
been made of HPL's quirks, but they weren't substantially more numerous
or severe than those of a great proportion of the population. I have
never worked in an office where at least two or three persons weren't as
frightened at a breath of cool air as HPL {{but did any collapse from it.
}} lots of us admire cats very much, and so on. Wouldn't it be better to
emphasize the really strange thing about him: his record of never having
harmed anyone, made an enemy, failed to be a friend to anyone he encoun-
tered? You can find lots of people who hate seafood but few who are genu-
inely as good as was HPL. I wish I could say something nice about that
other story, but it's pretty terrible. I don't think "St. John" has any
idea of the basic principles of fiction. The hero is like a comic opera
character -- cowardly, a sneak, surviving only by remarkable coincidences
and accidents. The style is a crazy mishmash of the Lovecraft tradition
and clumsy attempts to imitate realistic detective fiction. Paragraph

after paragraph violate logic. The first thing that happens in the main story is a telephone call from the hero's best friend; why, then, should it be necessary for the friend to identify himself and ask who it is on the other end of the line? If they're such pals, they should know each other's voices by now. The hero drives around Dorwich and sees that a blue line encircles the town, from one vantage point. I refuse to believe that any town would have geography which would make this possible from the ground level. The efforts at descriptive writing are hopeless. "The house...was shped in such a way as to make it a 'square circle' shape. Know what I mean?" The hill "with the house on it was shaped in such a way to make it look like it was over the town." I liked the cover very much; though I never saw Lovecraft, it looks like a believable depiction on the basis of photographs. ((as to your first point, Dorwich was pretty bad. But Savage didn't drive around the town, but merely guessed that it encircled it. As for the cover -- Prosser never met HPL either, but drew it from a picture in an early Arkham House book.-ed.)) The letter-column would benefit by a different system of inserting editorial comments. It's hard to be sure in certain places just who's talking. ((suggestions on how else it could be handled?)) I'm inclined to agree that it wasn't stupid to drop ASTOUNDING from the magazine's name; I grew up in an era when we fought for more dignified titles, and now that we finally get one, people start to yell foul. You may be fighting a losing battle by concentrating on weird fiction. I suspect that the horrors of WW II and the possibilities that the future holds have made the gruesome adjectives of weird fiction seem pallid today. But I still have a fondness for the stuff in limited quantities, and just think how fine you'd feel if all of a sudden someone starts to put out a professional weird fiction magazine again. ((who says we're concentrating on weird fiction? We're always glad to see it, but we'll be happy to look over any SF or even fine straight fiction if you people out there will send 'em to us! Great Britain as of this moment, has the highest regard for the weird tale. Its popularity is suprisingly high, yet they were in the last war not only up to their necks but in their homes as well! As to the future -- the bizarre possibilities it will bring have always been in existence. And since our own problems weren't envisioned by the earlier worriers, to those ones their problems were no less large. Who, during the early 40s, liked to think of what would happen if Hitler had won? As for a pro weird fiction mag-- I doubt it. Leo Margulies bought the rights to WEIRD TALES a few years back with stars in his eyes but it seems to have been a waste of money. No new WEIRD TALES popped up, and while occult magazines sell tremendously well and fantasy on the television running rampant (The U.S. Steel Hour will do FLOWERS FOR ALGERNON! You can't escape it!), nobody has had the money nor the nerve to try the market again. Whoops! Yes they did. I recall one magazine named SHOCK which printed good weirds recently, but was seriously marred by a comic editorial format -- a spider for the letters and a ghoul in the editor's chair, etc.-ed.))

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Bob Lichtman : BOB LICHTMAN OBJECTS

6137 Croft Ave.:

Los Angeles 56, The only objection I can find to your zine as far as California :material goes is that I dislike Lovecraft even in professional books so don't bother often to read him in fanzines. And even moreso I avoid pseudo-Lovecraft material. So there

really wasn't much in this issue to interest me. If you are intending to continue printing Lovecraft material, you might follow up your comment after the story that he was active in the fandom of the 30s and reprint some of the stuff he had in zines like Hornig's FANTASY FAN. I don't own a set, but found a bound volume in the Special Collections section of the UCLA library and have read most of it. (Most reprinting I had planned (which was slight to begin with) has been shelved for the time being. Unless a good number of readers desire it, it'll stay there indefinitely, I fear--ed.) I guess it's obvious that you wrote your editorial on stencils this time, else we wouldn't have had to put up with such things as "But very seldom does the amateur writer, the person who has not sold professionally, but writes good and often excellent pieces." What about him, huh? I don't mind your putting out a serious fanzine -- as you say, I'm free to ignore it if it gets too bad -- but your comments here sound as if you're trying to justify printing any old crud, just because it happens to be fan and not pro fiction. (Not at all, however, I have been violently attacked for suggesting a zine like this present issue, and I'm afraid I got carried away. Tell me, whether you like the pieces in this issue or not, are they crud?--ed.) The only decent artwork was by Prosser. Otherwise, artwork and headings stunk. The muddy toilet paper you've used in the beginning of the zine should be standard throughout. And stick to just one color, so that the zine will look more uniform. Good grief but you get a wide range of letters! From Redd Boggs to Bill Platt. Your lettercol isn't too bad,--I suppose you had to use the letters you got. But eliminate ~~##this~~ for something better! My own style is (this) but I prefer to keep it mostly to myself. (The range of letters is wide, but it was not that I had to use any old letters as much as these covered substantially everything in any of the others.)

Mike Deckinger: (EXCERPTS)
 85 Locust Ave.: To say I was impressed with KALEIDOSCOPE would be putting it mildly. The zine, no matter which name you use, has made an astounding (no plug) advance since the first issue. The repro is fine, Prosser art excellent, and everything extremely well handled. The cover is unusual, for both Prosser and a zine, and is an excellent one to lead into the story. Apparently Harrell's type was used for St. John's piece and the editorial. I'd rather you use it from now on for the entire zine. (Sorry, but 246 miles is a bit too far for me to go to use a typer!--ed.) There is absolutely nothing wrong with a WELL HANDLED sercon zine. The trouble is today that too many so-called sercon zines are edited by neos who immediately model their zines after imitation prozines. This is not what the reader wants. For good examples of sercon zines, look at AMRA or NEW FRONTIERS, two of the best zines put out today. I think KALEIDOSCOPE is fine....where does Chesapeake Publications come from? Why not keep the aforementioned title (C.P. is from a beer commercial, actually. This is the Bay Country. MIRAGE, we think, is more suitable for a fantasyzine.)...The multi-lettered headings were a trifle sloppy. For Ghu's sake, why not use a ruler?...The ASTOUNDING name change was stupid because it represents a move on the part of a tyrannical editor which many (a majority!) are opposed to...Speaking of Christians and atheists, I agree completely with Coulson in that they should not be established as opposing forces. Nothing grouches me more than to hear some fugghead say that because the Russ-

ians are athiests they are doubly bad, etc. Not all Russians are athiests and even if they were, being an athiest does not necessarily make one an enemy of freedom and liberty. {{Only Party Members are required to renounce God, and they comprise no more than 1% of the total Russ population; -ed.}} Kennedy made a real stupid statement a few months ago when he said that the real struggle today was between those who believe in God and those who don't. Anyone who is ignorant enough to make that type of remark doesn't deserve to be president. {{What'cha gonna do??}} Boggs was wrong. The idea for my story in CENTAUR was as a serious piece from the beginning. If it was to be funny, I would have written it quite differently.....I'm suprised that no one figured out that your "Distinishing the Gostak" quote was lifted (crroonously) from Miles Brucer's The Gostake and the Doshes in an early AMAZING.

MYTHS AND LEGENDS (continued from page 19)

When Cecolus presented the threaded shell to Minos, the Cretan king demanded Daedalus. Nothing ever came of it, though, since Minos drowned while taking a bath in Cecolus' palace.

Many archeologists and historians think that maybe the island empire was first settled by refugees from lower Egypt. In 3000 B.C. Menes united upper and lower Egypt by conquest and the land of the mouth of the Nile was covered in time. Nothing exists to tell us of these people except a few thousand graves in the ground and the impliments they were buried with.

Very little is known of lower Egypt before unification. Many things point to this migration, such as the Cretans were bronze workers, just as the Egyptians. Although the Egyptians had diplomatic relations with Crete, it is impossible that their slight influence should bring about the Cretans adopting many symbols the Egyptians used. The double axe, the symbol of Zeus and of which a gold and bronze emblem was found in the palace at Knossos, and other things. The latter is an Egyptian cult sign -- one of the first. Also found in both civilizations, although found to be first used in Egypt, is the crossed spears of Sais, the figure eight shield, the mountain, the dove, and the harpoon of Egypt from which the trident of Neptune might have evolved.

The civilization of Crete starts somewhere around 3000 B.C. It ends with the fall of Knossos around 1400 B.C. and from there civilization swings northward, to the Greeks.

One of the most interesting Ancient Myths is that of Gilgamesh of Babylon and Sumor. This will be the subject of the next article.

--Donald F. Anderson

EDITOR'S NOTE: This column is somewhat of an experiment, and its continuation in future issues of MIRAGE will depend entirely on you. If you would like to see more ancient myths told by Mr. Anderson, please say so, and do not fail to make your own comments and suggestions on his pieces.

ELTON SBRODY

Secker & Warburg, 1960 (London) \$2.

Reviewed by
JILL DODD

There is, I suspect, some very good reason why the authors of most ghost stories set their characters in not only a remote place but in usually a very old structure of some sort. The atmosphere is different with age, and with age comes horror because, probably, the greatest horror of all is of becoming old -- be it building or man. There was an old hotel and house in Robert Bloch's *PSYCHO*, an old castle in *Frankenstein*, and old houses in almost every other tale with a horrific setting since authors began.

Edgar Mittelholzer, in his fifteenth novel, has forsaken his experimental writings of *THE WEATHER AT MIDDENSNOT*, *CHILDREN OF KAYMANA*, etc., to return to the macabre world he created in *MY BONES AND MY FLUTE*. Coming from a remote corner of the world -- British Guiana -- his best novels are always set in the West Indies and in the Caribbean. Like many other authors before him he has created a world which bears little relationship to that which we know -- as, indeed, does most of the best science fiction and fantasy -- and in which the characters talk and behave in their own strange fashion.

ELTONSBRODY is a lonely old house on the island of Barbados with all the stock symptoms of being haunted. The wind whistles through the board in the house, the shutters rattle shakingly, the windows vibrate as though a demon were trying to get inside the barred tomb, the furniture creaks ominously, as though to threaten anyone who would dare to use it, and outside the dogs howl warningly to those outside who should venture out, or those who should venture in.

Mistress of ELTONSBRODY is Mrs. Scalfio, a kindly but not-quite-right-in-the-head character -- "I'm not a bad woman, but I'm strange..." who gives one of her rooms to a commercial artist, a Mr. Woodsley, when he finds that all the hotels on the island are full.

Mr. Woodsley finds ELTONSBRODY a very strange place indeed. Just as Norman Bates in *PSYCHO* had his taxidermy, so Mrs. Scalfio writes in her book of the praises of --- dissection. Her talk is scattered with descriptions of human gore and there are many mysterious goings-on in the local cemetery with gruesome tid bits such as the bones of a human finger turning up on the dining table wrapped up in a dinner napkin.

However, not all the residents of ELTONSBRODY are so concerned with the inner structures of the body; there is an exhibitionist maid of the house called Malvorne who is so proud of her shapely contours that she strips to the waist whenever there is likely to be an appreciative audience. It's very frustrating then that early in the story she falls down stairs and breaks her neck to be placed in a coma and looked after by a pretty Nurse Linton.

"It's insanity," says Mr. Woodsley, "Not the slightest doubt about it. when he finds one of the dissertations of the mistress of the house about the delights of dissection, but since he is unable to get a room anywhere else on the island and he is a commercial artist, he continues to stay there despite strange sounds throughout the house and over stranger

(continued on page 34)

Here is a pleasant little tale which, while original, shows a definite Lovecraftian influence a la "The Outsider." What was the hideous secret that came with a small bottle picked up in a tiny little store? George Wagner's ability to tell a good story is clearly evident here. So let's all find out just what happened.....

AS THE MISTS CLEARED

BY
GEORGE H. WAGNER

H Having been since early childhood a recluse of the most withdrawn sort, I was not wont to take those long and leisurely midday strolls which were considered so conducive to the literary craft by certain of my contemporaries.

All that I consider necessary to my stories of the ghostly and terrible can be found in my old Boston house. It's great rooms contain not only antique furnishings dating beyond the Great Fire of London, but the voluminous libraries assembled over the centuries by my ancestors. These book-collections contain such rare works as the religious histories of Cornelius Dinneaus, the witch-tales of Latanius, the lost philosophies of Malleus, and the almost legendary books of C. Retanius Mento (called by one writer a "First century Mather"). Some of my books, including the VITAE SPIRITUS of Gazio (1515), John Saxon's RUSTIC ARTS (SILVESTRE ARS, as well as Peter Frost's BLACK RITUALS, and Laney's DEATH HERBS, are not to be found in the Library of Congress, the British Museum, or the National Library at Paris.

Today I am still a recluse; but where I previously freely chose such a life, I am now forced to do so.

I was not -- as I have said -- accustomed to taking long walks, and it was not by choice that I did so on the disastrous day of which I speak, a shipment of books necessitating my presence at the local express office.

My journey thither would through the poorer section of Boston, dotted with the groups of small antique and curio shops that invariably cluster and grow in such places.

I stopped before one such window, and finding nothing of interest, moved on to another. I did this several times before I found a window that held my interest. There were many trinkets and treasures in that window, some of which I thought must have been at least early puritan in origin. There were several books, but these, while old, had counterparts in my collection. I saw the customary old stamps and coins, as well as various

dishes, ale mugs, and pieces of silverware. In one corner of the window rested a jumbled pile of chipped and worn daguerreotypes, one of these being of an elderly moustached man who looked for all the world like Charles Fort.

I was not, however, interested in these items. In the centre of the window glistened a beautiful emerald-coloured jade-green sphere. It was undoubtedly crystal, but unlike any crystal I had ever seen, either in America or on the Continent. It was, for that matter, unlike anything Jackson had described in his CRYSTAL BUYER'S CATALOGUE, and unlike anything Franz Heiber had discussed in HEIBER'S BUCH BEI SELTEN GLAS, the latter book causing as much commotion and controversy among antique collectors in Berlin when it was published there in 1933 as did Hitler's Storm Troopers among the general populace.

Mists seemed to swirl deep within the sphere, as if a daemon-god of some far world had imprisoned all the skies of Venus inside.

I opened the cracked glass door, passed through a dusty vestibule, and entered the shop. An old man stood behind tables littered with old newspapers, dishes, and various magazines.

The old man quoted a ridiculously low price, which I gleefully paid. He seemed, oddly, rather glad to get rid of the thing. As I left the shop, he handed me an envelope which, he said, went with the sphere. I received the strange impression that the man was not as old as he looked, but could not justify this suspicion.

I wrapped the crystal sphere in a piece of newspaper from the shop, and placed it in my coat pocket. Picking up my shipment of books (several manuscripts that I had sent to be bound in Providence), I hurried home to reexamine my curious find.

Safely home, I entered my study and placed the sphere on my writing table. The mists and vapours continued to swim about within it.

Inside the envelope, I found several pieces of yellowed parchment, well preserved and non-brittle. One contained a raving discourse directed against Cotton Mather, the Rhadamanthine sage of the Puritan era. This paper would have been of great interest to historians, but I have burnt it and shall not reveal its contents here. Many things have been very wisely suppressed concerning Mather (although he was, to be sure, basically a good man), and I shall not betray the trust of nearly 3 centuries

Another paper, some few years older, proved to be a history of the sphere. It told how the sphere had been created from volcanic glass in far Atlantis. From the Magic Island the sphere (referred to as the "Mystick Sphere" in all the parchments) was taken to the subterranean pre-Chaldean temples near modern day Sharsul, Iraq. These temples had fallen into ruin by the time that Roman travellers found the sphere there in 25 A.D. Unnamed misfortunes were visited on these travellers, both in the Near East and in Rome. Because of these the sphere was sealed in a crypt far beneath the temple of Saturn-Cronus. This crypt was opened some year later by a temple priest, who, after certain monetary inducements, had

forsaken his vow of secrecy concerning the sphere. It was delivered into the hands of a wealthy but eccentric Roman citizen, who dabbled in the Black Arts. He kept it in his villa until one night he drowned himself in the Black Lake of Avernus -- said by the ancients to be the entrance to Hades. The sphere was given to Nero, who was then emperor. Nero placed it in the imperial treasury, where it remained until it fell into the hands of a Chaldeo-Roman astrologer who fashioned a bronze base for it, which it still bore when it came into my hands.

The sphere moved north, into the land of the Vikings, and then to the South, and the Frankish Kingdoms. Taken to England with the invading Normans in 1066, it passed through Hastings, the following year seeing it in the nefarious "Black Abbey" at Brackenshire.

By 1200 the sphere was in Scotland, causing many divers troubles for those into whose hands it came. Monks hid it in a mountain cave, and it remained safe there for over four centuries. A robber band operating in the area found the sphere, and kept it in their possession until it was captured by loyalist forces sent to rout the outlaws. The sphere was given to Charles Wright, the Scotch-English commander of the loyalist forces.

The Wright family came to the New World in 1625. The paper was written by John Wright, a lawyer, in defense of his father, a defendant in the witch-craft trials of 1645. The younger Wright attempted to show that strange deaths in his family were caused by the evil powers of the sphere, and not by any actions of his father.

The court acquitted the elder Wright, due to the evidence presented in John Wright's documents, which was, we must add, the result of six months constant research. The court recommended that the sphere be cast into the sea, however, Dr. Thomas, who was to perform this rite, went mad and absconded with it instead. Neither Dr. Thomas nor the sphere were ever seen nor heard from again, said the third parchment.

As I did not believe in magic, although I wrote stories concerning it, and thought sorcery as something completely forgotten, except in those obscure and curious traveller's tales still occasionally circulated about such men as Aleister Crowley, I placed very little belief on the information given in the parchments. However, as I averted my eyes from the manuscripts and directed them at the crystal sphere, I saw a change begin to come over it. The mists seemed to swirl more wildly than ever; they were no longer the beautiful mists of the antique shop. Several times they thinned and for brief seconds they threatened to part, revealing some dark and terrible secret beneath. Then suddenly -- quite suddenly -- the mists did clear.

What the sphere showed cannot be fully described here, but has to do with the reason why I can never venture forth on Boston streets, even deep in the blackest tides of night. A face, nay, an imperfect parody of a face, like the work of some drunken, drug-crazed artist, grinned and gloated from within, bathing me in a baleful, hellish glare. The face of someone a fortnight dead could not have stirred in me the horror that I felt as I stood there. I could not dream what far-flung dimension had spawned such a thing, and I wondered if the same benevolent God who

created the Earth and all that dwell thereon had also created that.

There was something frighteningly familiar about that face in the sphere, and I knew then that the wordless whispers mouthed by those formless daemons that mumble mindlessly in the deepest abysses of my mind were true. That damnable face -- and I shuddered whenever the electric-edged thought traced razor-lines across my consciousness-- was a copy of my own face!

In some far universe, I understand now, in some twisted dimension, in some cosmic vortex of nothingness, a thousand infinities beyond reality, beyond the wide seas of space, past the citadels of time, there dwell creatures -- beasts -- who are caricatures of ourselves. Each of us has a double who is so blasphemously hideous that it is beyond human words-- or even sane thoughts -- to describe his countenance. The sphere, created by mad high-priests during the final days of decadent and depraved Atlantis, is a key, erasing the merciful walls between our dimension and the wild one of which I write.

I picked up the sphere and dashed it against the floor. Taking the heavy old iron poker, brought from England when the house was built in 1681 (perhaps only for this purpose?), I shattered the shoulsh thing with one blow. The resulting pieces I crushed and smashed until nothing remained of the sphere but crumbly green chips.

In my victory I revelled in the thought that the face was gone. I did, however, wonder just where it had gone. Had it returned to that dark dimension from which it came, unwittingly summoned by my presence near the sphere, or had it, perhaps, been in some way caught up in that gigantic tangle that is time and space? I did not worry on these thoughts, however. It was gone, and that was enough.

It was not too much later that I looked in a mirror.....
~~XX~~
 ELTONSBRODY (continued from page 30) smells. But snolls of what? Of decay? Of death? Of WHAT?

Norman Bates concealed comparatively little in his motel compared to what is hidden beneath the wooden shutters of ELTONSBRODY. In one locked room is the husband in evening dress - surely the best looking evening dress ever seen on a skeleton - In school clothes in another locked room is the little grandson, also down to his bare self. The attractive Nurse Linton is entombed in small pieces. Shapely Malverne also turns up in pieces -- but these aren't even entombed. These discoveries, unlike those of PSYCHO, do not surprise the reader in the same way. Certainly not as much as they do the hapless Mr. Woodseley. Edgar Mittelholzer is an author who scorns the use of surprise and it is surely a mark of his great writing skill that without this important element in a horror story he can still contrive to raise the hair on the back of the head almost effortlessly.

This is a highly individual story of evil, macabre happenings, and what Norman Bates and his razor did in a motel is but a fraction of what old Mrs. Soaife can do in ELTONSBRODY.

Wonder why it's always the sexy ones that are killed, though.....?

---Ilan Dodd